

A New American-Soviet Relationship

Mutual restraint, accommodation of interests, and the changed strategic situation open broad opportunities to the Soviet Union and the United States. It is our hope that the Soviet Union will recognize, as we do, that our futures are best served by serious negotiation of the issues which divide us. We have taken the initiative in establishing an agenda on which agreement could profoundly alter the substance of our relationship:

—*SALT*. Given the available resources, neither of us will concede a significant strategic advantage to the other. Yet the temptation to attempt to achieve such advantage is ever present, and modern technology

makes such an attempt feasible. With our current strategic capabilities, we have a unique opportunity to design a stable and mutually acceptable strategic relationship.

We did not expect agreements to emerge quickly, for the most vital of interests are engaged. A resolution will not be achieved by agreement on generalities. We have put forward precise and serious proposals that would create no unilateral advantages and would cope with the major concerns of both sides.

We do not yet know what conclusions the Soviet Union will draw from the facts of the situation. If its leaders share our assessment, we can unquestionably bring competition in strategic weapons under control.

—*Europe*. With our allies, we have entered into negotiations with the USSR to improve the Berlin situation. Arrangements which, in fact, bring an end to the twenty-four years of tension over Berlin, would enable us to move beyond the vestiges of the postwar period that have dominated our relationship for so long. A broader era of negotiations in Europe then becomes possible.

Progress toward this goal also could be obtained through a successful agreement on mutual reduction of military forces, especially in Central Europe where confrontation could be most dangerous.

—*The Middle East* is heavy with the danger that local and regional conflict may engulf the Great Powers in confrontation.

We recognize that the USSR has acquired important interests and influence in the area, and that a lasting settlement cannot be achieved unless the Soviet Union sees it to be in its interest.

We continue to believe that it is in the Soviet interest to support a reasonable settlement. The USSR is not, however, contributing to that end by providing increasingly large and dangerous numbers of weapons to the Arab states, or by building military positions for its own purposes. We are prepared to seek agreement with the USSR and the other major powers to limit arms shipments to the Middle East.

We have not tried to lay down a rigid order of priorities within this agenda. It is a fact of international politics, however, that major issues are related. The successful resolution of one such issue cannot help but improve the prospects for solving other problems. Similarly, aggressive action in one area is bound to exert a disturbing influence in other areas.

An assessment of U.S.-Soviet relations at this point in my Administration has to be mixed. There have been some encouraging developments and we welcome them. We are engaged in a serious dialogue in *SALT*. We have both signed the treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons from the seabeds. We have both ratified the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We have entered negotiations on the issue of Berlin. We have taken the first step toward practical cooperation in outer space.

On the other hand, certain Soviet actions in the Middle East, Berlin, and Cuba are not encouraging. Taken against a background of intensive and unrestrained anti-American propaganda, these actions inevitably suggest that intransigence remains a cardinal feature of the Soviet system.

Yet these events may have provided a basis for future progress in our relations. Properly understood, they illustrate the altogether incommensurate risks inherent in a policy of confrontation, and the marginal benefits achievable by it.

Against this background it is an appropriate moment to take stock of our relations, and to weigh the decisions necessary for further progress.

The Soviet leaders will be reviewing their own policies and programs in connection with the 24th Congress of their Party. This report sets forth my own assessment of our relations with the USSR, and the principles by which we propose to govern our relations in the future. I have outlined the factors that make for common interests and suggested an agenda of outstanding opportunities:

—a more stable military relationship for the next decade.

—a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

—an agreed framework for security in Europe.

We are under no illusion that these are easy tasks. But, as I said in my address to the United Nations:

"In the world today we are at a crossroads. We can follow the old way, playing the traditional game of international relations, but at ever-increasing risk. Everyone will lose. No one will gain. Or we can take a new road.

"I invite the leaders of the Soviet Union to join us in taking that new road . . ."